



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Denial of Judicial Review in the Zhovtis Case

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Casey Christensen
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 17, 2009

The United States is disappointed that a judicial panel of the Almaty District Court refused to review the conviction of human rights advocate Yevgeniy Zhovtis.

The willingness and the ability of superior courts to review the decisions of lower courts for possible error are hallmarks of the rule of law. Both within Kazakhstan and in the wider OSCE community, numerous voices have pointed to the potential flaws in the trial process leading to Mr. Zhovtis' conviction; yet these claims have apparently been dismissed without a full hearing.

We again call upon Kazakhstan to provide a full and impartial review of the trial in Mr. Zhovtis' case and for his fair treatment by Kazakhstani penal authorities. Such a review would honor the letter and spirit of our shared OSCE commitments and the vision that Kazakhstan committed to pursue as Chair.

Thank you, Madam Chair.